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Our Vision: To be the best place in America to vote

GOVERNOR'S STERLING AWARD RECIPIENT

A large, stylized graphic of the American flag, with red and white stripes and a blue field with white stars, is positioned on the left side of the page. The text "SMOLLER" and "SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS" is written in a large, bold, blue font, curving around the flag graphic.

SMOLLER
SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS

2023 U.S. EAC

**CLEARINGHOUSE AWARDS
SUBMISSION**

Best Practices in Recruiting,
Retaining, and Training Poll Workers

BEST PRACTICES IN RECRUITING, RETAINING, AND TRAINING POLL WORKERS



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The Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections office developed **VoteHillsborough Training Labs**, an immersive experience for poll workers that has vastly improved training on election technology while increasing worker confidence prior to their work assignments. This training experience not only equips poll workers with essential skills but also provides elections staff an opportunity to monitor and evaluate poll worker performance and engagement in real time. Moreover, the in-person labs enable elections staff to accurately identify individuals requiring additional training support and those demonstrating a firm grasp of the technology, positioning them as prime candidates for leadership roles in forthcoming elections.

We had seven core objectives for developing the VoteHillsborough Training Labs:

1. Design interactive, hands-on training modules focused on the real-world application of technology in polling places, ensuring relevance and practical utility.
2. Tailor training activities to adhere to adult learning principles, emphasizing self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation to foster a more engaging and effective learning environment.
3. Clearly articulate the direct benefits and real-world impact of the training labs on poll workers' roles, enhancing their understanding of the value and relevance of their training to their job responsibilities.
4. Implement a comprehensive performance tracking system to monitor poll worker progress from initial sign-in, through the completion of lab activities, to self-evaluation, ensuring a thorough understanding of material and self-awareness in learning achievements.
5. Align training lab scenarios closely with content from our online poll worker training course, facilitating better retention of information and seamless transfer of skills to practical, real-world election day tasks.
6. Employ knowledgeable facilitators to lead the training labs, offering expert oversight and personalized support to help participants navigate and resolve training scenarios independently, enhancing their problem-solving skills.
7. Utilize post-training feedback surveys to continually refine and enhance the training experience, ensuring the training labs evolve to meet the needs and preferences of participants effectively.

VOTEHILLSBOROUGH TRAINING LABS

Prerequisites

We require online poll worker training for all new and returning workers prior to each election they are assigned to work. Our training program is tailored to specific roles, offering four distinct learning pathways. These pathways are designed based on each worker's assignment and position. The online training course is split into two main sections: 'Poll Worker Fundamentals', which provides general information about elections, and 'Position-Specific Activities', where workers engage in simulations of check-in procedures and other critical poll worker functions. Typically, this online training takes about 4-6 hours to complete. Once the poll worker completes the online training coursework, they become eligible to schedule an in-person training lab.

Training Lab Requirements

The in-person training lab experience is required to be completed once by workers for each election cycle. The in-person labs are instrumental in allowing workers to apply their online training in a practical setting, working independently with election equipment. This setup not only facilitates hands-on experience but also provides a personalized interaction with each worker.



Electronic Sign-In

Upon entry to the Training Lab, poll workers are quickly and seamlessly signed into the training lab. During the sign-in process, staff takes an updated photo of each poll worker, confirms their work assignments and contact details, and distributes a procedure manual and lab materials based on their work assignment.

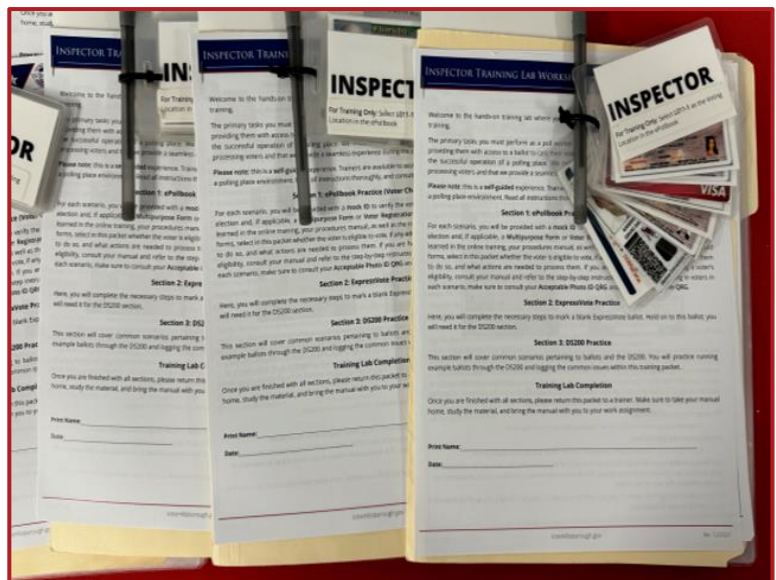


Training Lab Materials

Poll workers are provided a printed and bound poll worker procedure manual and training lab packet specific to their upcoming work assignment. The training lab packet contains step-by-step instructions for each section of the training lab as well as the specific training scenarios they will be practicing on during the 2-hour training lab period.


Training Schedule and Self-Paced Activities

Training labs are scheduled to allow registration of 20 participants within two-hour windows, with four sessions conducted per day. This format allows us to train upwards of 500 poll workers per week, including sessions that are available on Saturdays. During countywide election cycles, training labs are conducted over a 5-week period allowing for training 2,000 – 3,000 poll workers within the same training location. Since the labs are self-paced, workers may complete the lab in less time. Conversely, if participants require additional time, they are permitted to stay past the two-hour window or schedule a follow-up training lab to complete the required activities. Our goal is for poll workers to leave the training lab feeling confident about their upcoming work assignment.



Real-World, Relatable Training Scenarios

Each section of the training lab provides real-world examples, including 10 voter check-in scenarios for participants to practice with on the electronic pollbook and 7 unique scenarios for participants to practice with on the DS200 tabulator. The scenarios were created based on actual interactions that occur in the polling place and the training cases created were compiled to present realistic, though fictional, voters.

VOTER CHECK-IN PRACTICE 

5 This voter approaches you at the Voter Assistance Table.

Name: Margaret Cansino Welles | DOB: 5/18/1984
Resources: ID #5, Voter Registration Application #5

You: Hello, may I please see your photo ID?
Voter: Sure, here's my ID. (The voter hands you ID #5)
ID Presented:

Review the ID using the questions below:

1. Is ID #5 an approved Photo ID?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Is Voter Active (ACT) or Inactive (INA)? ACT <input type="checkbox"/> INA <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is it expired?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
3. Is there a signature?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

4. Issue: (Select all that apply as observations are made)

<input type="checkbox"/> Voter lacks current photo ID	<input type="checkbox"/> Voter's eligibility is challenged	<input type="checkbox"/> System info does not match ID
<input type="checkbox"/> No signature on one or more IDs	<input type="checkbox"/> One or more IDs are expired	<input type="checkbox"/> No issue with this voter

Use the Manual Search to lookup the voter. When trying to search, make sure to use First and Last Name, Last Name and Date of Birth, and Last Name and House Number. If we still can't find the voter, we'll need more information. You: I'm sorry, but I can't seem to locate you in our system. Do you need to make any changes or updates to your information?
Voter: Oh goodness, you know what? I got married and forgot to update my voter registration. Can you try to search for my maiden name, Margaret Carmen Cansino?
Once you locate the voter, confirm her status as Active or Inactive. Since her name has changed, press the Yes, Needs Change button.

5. Is a Multi-purpose Form or Voter Registration Application required? Yes No

6. Does the voter require assistance? Yes No

The voter would need to fill out a Voter Registration Application (#5) and then you can make changes to their information in the ePollbook. Update the voter's name and return to the Check-in screen. If the voter is eligible to vote, press the Get Voter Signature button.

Sign for the voter and press the Done button. Normally, this is where you compare the signature on the ID with the voter's signature and if they match, press the Issue Ballot button. When Completing the Check-in, it asks if the voter is surrendering their Vote by Mail Ballot. The voter indicates that they did bring this with them. Press the Yes button. Return the voter's ID.

Review the questions below and record the Ballot Style Ticket number (if applicable):


7. Is the voter eligible to vote a regular ballot? Yes No

8. Solution: (Select all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Issue a ballot style ticket	<input type="checkbox"/> Update the voter's info
<input type="checkbox"/> Process a Provisional Ballot	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask for a signature ID
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Check-in	<input type="checkbox"/> Voter already voted

BALLOT STYLE

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ePollbook / Electronic Precinct Register

This training lab activity involves practicing work process and voter eligibility on the electronic precinct register. The activity challenges participants to make the correct choices, completing the required forms correctly, and taking the necessary actions to properly handle each unique scenario.



ExpressVote / ADA Ballot Marking Device

During this activity, participants are able to go through the entire process of using an ExpressVote device. Poll workers are instructed to make their selections using the touchscreen and spend time navigating the screen selections with the ExpressVote's tactile device. By the end of this activity, participants are able to apply the knowledge they learned online about the ExpressVote to properly initiate, mark, and cast an ExpressVote ballot. This hands-on, individualized experience allows each worker the time they need to fully understand the functionality and how to assist voters in using the ExpressVote Ballot Marking device.



DS200 / Tabulator

During this activity, participants take turns casting training ballots into the DS200 tabulator. Training ballots are specifically created to allow participants the opportunity to review all of the different error screens that can appear during in-person voting. Participants work directly with the tabulation equipment and experience the process for handling overvoted, undervoted, and ambiguously marked ballots.



AWARD CRITERIA

INNOVATION

Our training labs represent an innovative approach, meticulously designed based on the insights and suggestions collected from poll workers' experiences during past election cycles. By analyzing thousands of feedback submissions, we have developed a dual-faceted training methodology tailored for adult learners. This method seamlessly integrates a hands-on training component for tactile learners while offering concise, relatable, and scenario-based exercises for those who prefer engaging with real-world applications of their skills. This design ensures that every poll worker, regardless of their preferred learning style, receives a comprehensive and effective training experience.

SUSTAINABILITY

The development of our training lab curriculum is grounded in sustainability. Training lab materials are a flexible template that can be updated and reused for successive elections, requiring minimal effort and resources. The content is deliberately crafted without tying the material to specific election dates or cycles, allowing for easy adaptation and updates based on evolving feedback without substantial overhauls. This approach not only conserves resources but also ensures that the training remains relevant and responsive to the needs of poll workers.

OUTREACH

Our innovative training labs offer a platform for meaningful engagement with poll workers. By centralizing training in one accessible location and adopting a self-paced format, we create a conducive environment for personalized interaction and feedback. This setup allows our Poll Worker Services team to dedicate time and assess individual performance and provide targeted guidance, enhancing the learning experience. The following feedback from the 2023 election cycle underscores the value poll workers place on this revamped in-person training, highlighting its effectiveness in fostering a supportive and interactive learning environment:

"All the trainers were highly attentive and responsive to our questions, which were many. They answered all our questions, helped us understand the subtleties of the situational differences, and literally walked us to the various machines involved." – **Ellen B.**

"Excellent format, allowing us to do the lessons at our own pace." – **Dick B.**

"The training staff at the lab were very helpful to me (as a newbie) in getting comfortable with various scenarios and questions that came up during the training. They were efficient, well-informed and emphasized the important details - like reading what's on the screens and lab scenarios." – **Mary M.**

"Once I got started, I was on a roll. If you follow the worksheet line-by-line, it's easy to follow. Helped me understand many possible options for lookup and check-in and the nuances of the ePollbook. Loved the scenarios" – **Thomina F.**

"I appreciate the process allowing us to do our lab individually and just seek help, as needed. It allowed me to be done in an hour, but beginners could stay the full time, as they need." – **Judith A.**

“In the 10+ years I have worked the elections this training was by far the best. Real exercises helped refresh the online training. Hands on helps since the gap between elections is every 2 years. Good job poll worker training team!” – **Robert G.**

“I like the new format of allowing us to solve the problems in each situation rather than having an instructor guide every step. An instructor was readily available to help when I didn't know what to do. The room was quieter with no interruptions of constant questions or stories of scenarios.” – **Janis C.**

“The training provided during the ePollbook section of the training lab was very thought provoking and provided a great glimpse of what's to be expected on election day.” – **Christopher C.**

COST-EFFECTIVENESS

Transitioning to our self-paced training lab model has created a significant reduction in operational costs compared to traditional, instructor-led training programs. Previously, extensive in-person sessions required a substantial instructor workforce and multiple locations, incurring high costs. Our streamlined two-hour labs, facilitated by a small team in a single venue, not only ensures uniformity in the dissemination of information, but also drastically reduces the financial and logistical burdens associated with poll worker training. This cost-effective approach maximized resource efficiency while maintaining our high training standards.

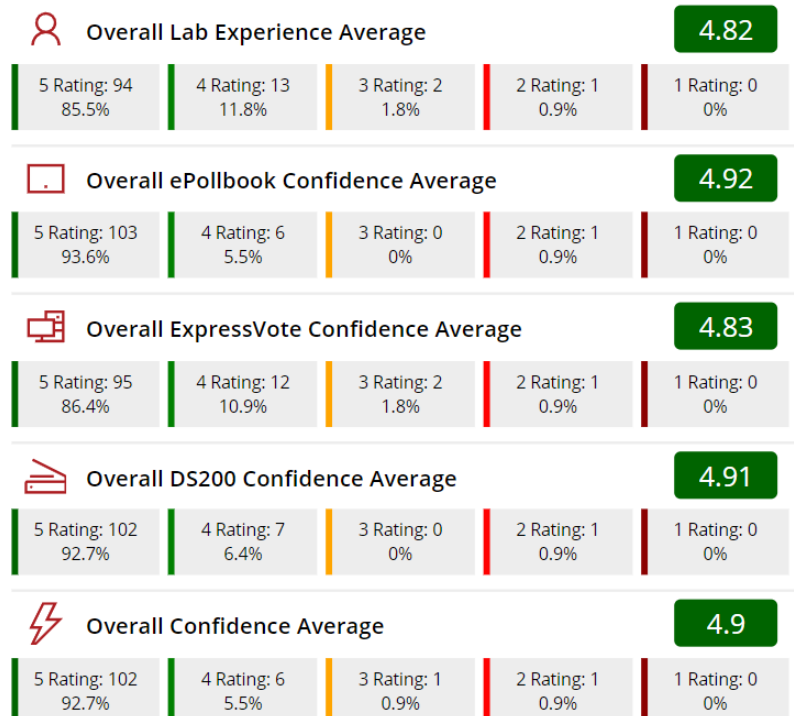
REPLICABILITY

Our training lab framework is designed with replicability in mind, offering a practical, hands-on compliment to online training initiatives with minimal overhead. Its adaptability makes it an ideal solution for elections offices transitioning from instructor-led formats to more modern, self-directed training methodologies. The structure and content of our labs are easily customizable, facilitating a blend of independent study and practical application tailored to the specific needs of poll workers. This replicable model not only enhances the accessibility of comprehensive training but also encourages a more engaged and well-prepared workforce.

GENERATING POSITIVE RESULTS

Our implementation of the in-person training labs has been very successful. We measure the success of our training programs in 1) How they are received by participants and 2) How poll workers perform during their assignments. Included on the right are results from training lab surveys completed by poll workers during the 2023 election cycle. We asked participants to rate their confidence level after completion of each section of the training lab on a score of 1 – 5. The ratings range from:

1, Not confident to 5, Highly confident.



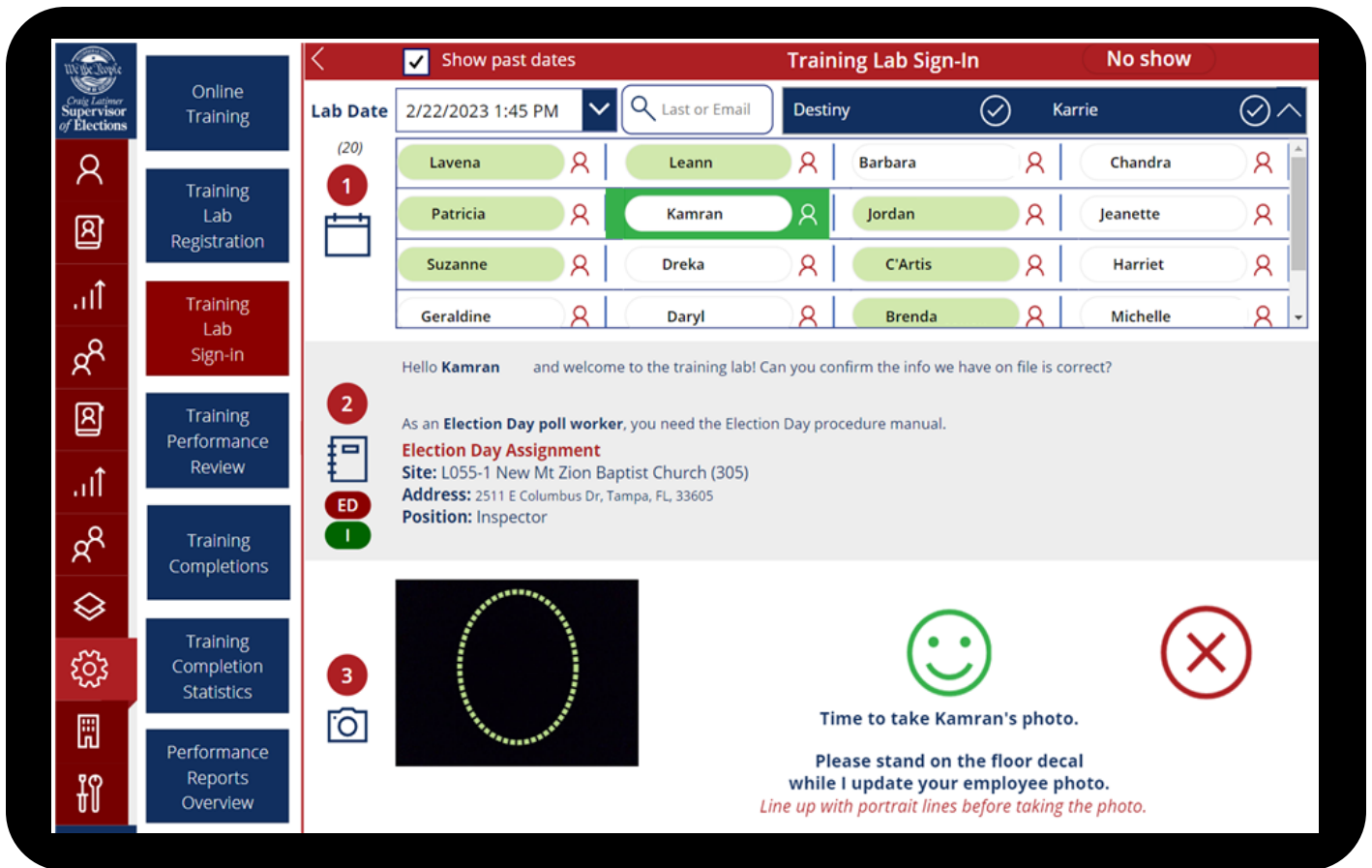
In terms of poll worker performance for the 2023 election cycle, we tracked the following improvements since instituting in-person training labs:

1. Reduction in poll worker administrative errors during post-election processing
2. Reduction in total number of inbound calls to the Election Phone Bank pertaining to poll worker procedures and technology
3. Fewer mistakes observed resulting from poll worker errors during the voter check-in process
4. Fewer forms completed incorrectly by poll workers observed during post-election processing
5. During our post-election feedback survey, **97.9%** of poll worker respondents felt their election experience was either **Very Good** or **Excellent**
6. During our post-election feedback survey, **99.7%** of poll worker respondents felt the training provided was **Very Good** or **Excellent** in preparing them for their work assignment

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Electronic Sign-in with Prescheduled Lab Appointments (Poll worker names and contact information redacted)

Pictured below is an application that was developed by the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections office to track poll worker training registrations, sign-in poll workers to the training lab, and track training completions.





1

Sample
Photo ID
Image

This voter approaches you at the Voter Assistance Table.

Name: Alicia A. Cook | **DOB:** 6/12/1983

Resources: ID #1

You: Hi, may I please see your photo ID?

Voter: Sure, here's my ID. (The voter hands you ID #1)

ID Presented: _____

Review the ID using the questions below:

1. Is ID #1 an approved Photo ID? Yes No
2. Is it expired? Yes No
3. Is there a signature? Yes No
4. Issue: (Select all that apply as observations are made)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Voter lacks current photo ID | <input type="checkbox"/> Voter's eligibility is challenged | <input type="checkbox"/> System info does not match ID |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No signature on one or more IDs | <input type="checkbox"/> One or more IDs are expired | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No issue with this voter |

Is Voter Active (ACT) or Inactive (INA)?

ACT INA

If the ID is valid, attempt to scan it with the ePollbook. If it will not scan, use the **Manual Check-in** to find the voter. Once the voter's record shows on the ePollbook, check if the information shown matches what is on the ID and if the voter is in Active or Inactive status.

You: Do you need to make any changes or updates to your information?

Voter: No, I think everything should still be the same.

Press the **No, Continue** button. If the voter is eligible to vote, press the **Get Voter Signature** button.

5. Is a Multi-purpose Form or Voter Registration Application required? Yes No
6. Does the voter require assistance? Yes No

Sign for the voter and press the **Done** button. Normally, this is where you compare the signature on the ID with the voter's signature and if they match, press the **Issue Ballot** button. Return the voter's ID.

Review the questions below and record the Ballot Style Ticket number (if applicable):

7. Is the voter eligible to vote a regular ballot? Yes No
8. Solution: (Select all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Issue a ballot style ticket | <input type="checkbox"/> Update the voter's info |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Process a Provisional Ballot | <input type="checkbox"/> Ask for a signature ID |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete the Check-In | <input type="checkbox"/> Voter already voted |

BALLOT STYLE				
1	1	3	0	1
				PW Issues _____



The ExpressVote is a ballot marking device that uses a touch screen and/or assistive technology to capture voters' selections. This device allows voters who may need assistance with marking their ballot, to do so independently.

Follow these instructions:



Step 1 – Insert Blank Ballot Card

Insert the blank ballot card into the slot on the device. Align the corner cut on the ballot with the corner cut on the ballot-marking device.



Step 2 – Select Precinct and Ballot Style

The ExpressVote prompts you to select the Precinct, which is a 3-digit number indicating a voter's home voting area. Once the precinct is selected, it will ask you to select a ballot style, which should be the precinct followed by two additional numbers. **For the purposes of this lab, you may select any of the Precincts shown, and then select any available Ballot Style.**



Step 3 – Select Language and Make Selections

You can make your selections on the ExpressVote using the touchscreen and/or the keypad. You can also adjust the screen contrast and magnification. A checkmark will appear next to your selection confirming your choice, and your selection will also change color. To change a selection, just touch the box with your desired preference. You can easily navigate through the election contests by touching the buttons labeled Next and Previous located on the Navigation Bar at the bottom of the screen or by using the Back and Forward buttons on the keypad.



Step 4 – Verify Selections

After you have made your selections, the summary screen appears for you to review and confirm your selections. If you wish to change a selection as you scroll through the summary screen, simply touch the selection to return to that contest to make your desired change. If you are satisfied with your selections, print your ballot card by navigating to the Next screen and selecting the print card option. Your marked ballot will be returned to you from the same slot where you first inserted your blank ballot card.



Step 5 – Scan Ballot

Place your printed card into the appropriate tray on the DS200 and it will do the rest.

Sign below to indicate the above steps have been successfully completed:



Answer the questions below using the pre-marked demonstration ballots. For training purposes, each ballot is numbered to coincide with a question below.

Remember: Voters should scan their own ballot into the DS200. When serving as the DS200 Inspector, you should be stationed 3-5 ft. away from the machine and only assist the voter when they have a question or if there is a technical issue with the machine (such as a ballot jam). The exercises below are meant to make you more familiar with the DS200 and the messages that can appear on the display screen. **For each question, check off the best answer.**

Before processing any of the training ballots, place your marked ExpressVote ballot into the DS200. Sign below to indicate completion.

1. Observe Ballot #1. What do you notice about this ballot?

Overvote Undervote Blank Torn Unreadable marks Normal

Place the ballot into the DS200. What happens to the ballot?

Ballot accepted Ballot rejected/paused

2. Observe Ballot #2. What do you notice about this ballot?

Overvote Undervote Blank Torn Unreadable marks Normal

Place the ballot into the DS200. What happens to the ballot?

Ballot accepted Ballot rejected/paused

The DS200 presents the below options. Mark your selection.

Return ballot Cast ballot

3. Observe Ballot #3. What do you notice about this ballot?

Overvote Undervote Blank Torn Unreadable marks Normal

Place the ballot into the DS200. What happens to the ballot?

Ballot accepted Ballot rejected/paused